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ABSTRACT

An evaluation was done of New York City Public Schools' Alternative Learning Methodologies through Academics Program (Project ALMA) for Spanish-speaking students. Project ALMA served 407 9th and 10th graders at 2 sites (Queens and the Bronx). All of the students spoke Spanish, and 75.7 percent of them were eligible for the Free Lunch Program. The project targeted two schools with a recent influx of immigrants and offered English as a Second Language (ESL); native language arts (NLA); and bilingual instruction in the content areas of mathematics, social studies, and science. Project ALMA sought to enhance the students' positive feelings toward their native and American heritages and to increase parents' awareness of career opportunities open to their children. The project included non-project students on field trips on a space-available basis. One school had a hotline in Spanish that parents could use to determine if their children were actually attending school. An outstanding feature of the program was peer tutoring in mathematics. Project ALMA was not fully implemented in its first year, although it met objectives in content area subjects, career advisement, and special education referral. It failed to meet objectives for ESL, NLA, and gifted and talented placement. Four appendices summarize the data collection and analysis procedures and provide supplementary study information. (JB)

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OREA Report

Alternative Learning Methodologies trough Academics
(Project ALMA)
Grant Number: T003A00209
1990-91

FINAL EVALUATION PROFILE

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Alternative Learning Methodologies trough Academics
(Project ALMA)
Grant Number: T003A00209
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FINAL EVALUATION PROFILE

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This report has been prepared by the Bilingual, Multicultural, and Early Childhood Evaluation Unit of the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment.

Additional copies of this report are available from:

Dr. Tomi Deutsch Berney
Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment
New York City Public Schools
110 Livingston Street, Room 732
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 935-3790

FOREWORD

The body of this report is preceded by an Extract which presents an overview of salient points of the project: funding cycle; enrollment figures; background of students served; admission criteria; and programming features, strengths, and limitations, including the outcome of all objectives. The extract also presents the conclusions drawn by the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) about the program and its recommendations for program improvement.

The extract is followed by the body of the report, titled Program Assessment. This includes such information as staffing, program implementation, and outcome and implementation objectives. Instructional objectives are presented first, followed by noninstructional objectives. The report then addresses those aspects of programming mandated by Title VII regulations that do not have specifically stated objectives. This may be information on attendance and dropout rate, grade retention, mainstreaming, referrals out of the program to meet special needs of the students, and withdrawals. A case history concludes the report.

Data for this profile were collected and analyzed using a variety of procedures, which are described in Appendix A following the text.

Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment
New York City Public Schools

E.S.E.A. Title VII Evaluation Profile

Alternative Learning Methodologies through Academics
Project ALMA

Grant Number T003A00209
1990-91

EXTRACT

PROJECT DIRECTOR: Eileen May

FUNDING CYCLE: Year 1 of 3

SITES

School	Borough	Grade Level	Enrollment*	
			(fall)	*(spring)*
John Bowne High School	Queens	9-10	183	179
John F. Kennedy High School	Bronx	9-10	196	199

*The project enrolled 407 students, serving 379 in the fall and 378 in the spring.

STUDENT BACKGROUND

Native Language	Number of Students
Spanish	407

Countries of Origin	Number of Students
Dominican Republic	259
Colombia	35
Peru	20
Unites States	17
Ecuador	13
Honduras	10
El Salvador	7
Puerto Rico	7
Other countries	39

Mean Years of Education in Native Country: 7.0; in the United States: 2.5

Percentage of Students Eligible for Free Lunch Program: 75.7

Many of the students' parents worked in low-paying jobs in service industries. Some families lived in shelters. Some students had to supplement the family income by working after school, and some cared for younger siblings.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

Ninth and tenth grade students who scored at or below the 40th percentile on the Language Assessment Battery (LAB) were classified as limited English proficient (LEP) and were eligible for the program. The project also admitted very able mathematics students in order to provide peer tutoring in mathematics and computer technology.

PROGRAMMING

Features

The program targeted two schools with a recent influx of immigrants, most of whom came from the Dominican Republic. It offered English as a Second Language (E.S.L.), Native Language Arts (N.L.A.), and bilingual instruction in the content areas of mathematics, social studies, and science. Project ALMA sought to enhance the students' positive feelings toward their native and American heritages and to increase parents' awareness of career opportunities open to their children.

Strengths and Limitations

The project benefitted mainstream as well as LEP students by including the non-project students on field trips on a space-available basis. John Bowne High School had a hotline in Spanish that parents could use to determine if their children were actually attending school.

An outstanding program feature was its peer tutoring in mathematics. The project also issued a newsletter twice a year. It was written for students but also given to the principal, assistant principal, E.S.L. teachers, and other interested staff.

The program at John F. Kennedy High School got off to a late start because it had no computer lab, nor did it have office space or a telephone until mid-March. Another difficulty at that site was that the resource specialist at that site was replaced in February.

One of the major concerns of Project ALMA was that students were limited by being taught mathematics with E.S.L. techniques rather than bilingually. The requirement that Project ALMA students take three E.S.L. courses per day limited the flexibility of programming.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Project ALMA was not fully implemented in its first year. It met its objectives for content area subjects, career advisement, and special education referral. It partially met its objective for attendance. It failed to meet its objectives for E.S.L., N.L.A., and gifted and talented placement. OREA was unable to evaluate the objective for parental involvement because Project ALMA did not provide sufficient data.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- Provide OREA with the data necessary to evaluate all objectives.
- Explore reasons why the project tell short of meeting its objectives in E.S.L., and N.L.A.
- Find ways to improve attendance of project students at John Bowne High School.
- Recruit eligible students for placement in gifted and talented programs.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

STAFFING

Title VII Staff (Total 5)

Title	Degree	Language Competencies
Project Director	M.A.	Spanish
Resource Specialist	M.A.	Spanish
Resource Specialist	M.A.	Spanish
Paraprofessional		Spanish
Paraprofessional		Spanish

Other Staff Working With Project Students (Total 52)

Degree		Certification		Language Competencies	
Ph.D.	5	E.S.L.	15	Spanish	31
M.A.	29	N.L.A.	5		
M.S.	1	Assistant Principal	1		
M.B.A.	2	Bilingual	4		
B.A.	13	Spanish	5		
H.S.	2	Mathematics	2		
		Guidance and Counseling	1		
		Global History	1		
		Unreported	18		

IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTCOMES (Objectives prefaced by •)

English as a Second Language (E.S.L.)

Level	Periods per Week
Literacy	10
Beginning	15
Intermediate	15
Advanced	10
Transitional	10

All levels of E.S.L. used both the communicative and the contextual approach for teaching grammar, emphasized communication skills, and featured cooperative learning as well as peer tutoring. (See Appendix B for materials used.)

- Seventy percent of the target students will demonstrate an appropriate increase in English language proficiency.

Evaluation Instrument: Language Assessment Battery (LAB)*

Pretest: May 1990; posttest: May 1991.

Number of students for whom pre- and posttest data were reported: 296

Percentage of students showing gain: 57.8 (N= 171)

Project did not meet objective.

Native Language Arts (N.L.A.)

Estimated percentage of students lacking literacy skills in native language: John Bowne High School--approximately 18-20 percent; John F. Kennedy High School--approximately 30-35 percent.

Level	Periods Per Week
Beginning	5
Intermediate	5
Advanced	5
Advanced Placement	5
Literacy	5

The N.L.A. courses used the communicative and contextual approaches as well as cooperative learning groups. (See Appendix C for materials used.)

- Seventy-five percent of the Spanish-dominant participants will demonstrate significant increases in Spanish language achievement.

Evaluation Indicator: Final course grades.

Of the 354 students enrolled in N.L.A. in the fall, 64.7 percent passed. Of the 365 students enrolled in the spring, 71.8 percent passed.

Project did not meet objective.

Content Area Subjects

At John F. Kennedy High School, more than 90 percent of the students did not pass the Regents' Competency Test (R.C.T.) in mathematics. Students were offered all three sequential mathematics courses, but most lacked basic skills. The resource specialist was making the curriculum more understandable to the LEP student by changing the teachers' approaches to instruction.

See Appendix D for materials used.

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*OREA used a gap reduction design to evaluate the effect of supplementary instruction on project students' performance on the LAB. Since all LEP students in New York City are entitled to such instruction, no valid comparison group exists among these students, and OREA used instead the group on which the LAB was normed. Test scores are reported in Normal Curve Equivalents (N.C.E.s), which are normalized standard scores with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 21.06. It is assumed that the norm group has a zero gain in N.C.E.s in the absence of supplementary instruction and that participating students' gains are attributable to project services.

- As a result of participating in the program 75 percent of program students will show significant gains in computer science (Basic and/or COBOL) and achieve a passing grade of 65 or better.

Evaluation Indicator: Final course grades.

The project did not receive its own computers. Project ALMA students attended the school's computer lab at John Bowne High School only. There was no computer lab available at John F. Kennedy High School.

In the fall semester, the 29 students at John F. Kennedy High School who enrolled in computer science passed. Of the 17 students enrolled in the spring, 89.5 percent (15) passed.

Project met objective.

Attendance

- As a result of participating in the program, attendance rate of project students will be 10 percent greater than mainstream students'.

Evaluation Indicator: Attendance records.

Attendance Rates

School	Project Students' Rate	Mainstream Students' Rate
John Bowne High School	89.1	86.7
John F. Kennedy High School	92.5	78.2

The project met its objective at John F. Kennedy High School only.

Project partially met objective.

Career Advisement

- All project students will meet on an individual basis with the bilingual specialist for advisement at least two times during the school year for career orientation and planning.

Evaluation Indicator: Program records.

All project students met twice with the bilingual grade advisor/guidance counselor and at least once with the Project ALMA resource specialist.

Project met objective.

Special Education Referral

Students with severe academic or social problems were referred by school staff to the Project ALMA resource specialist who interviewed the students. After discussions with the assistant principal of the bilingual program, students were then referred, if necessary, to the school guidance counselor for further assessment and follow-up.

- As a result of participating in the program, the rate of referral to special programs, e.g., remedial programs, will be 10 percent less than mainstream students'.

Evaluation Indicator: Program records.

No students were referred to remedial programs.

Project met objective.

- As a result of participation in the program, students' grade retention or referral to or placement in special education classes rate will be 10 percent less than mainstream students.

	Number of Students	Percentage	Mainstream Students' Rate
John Bowne High School			
Referred to special education:	0	0	0.0
Retained in grade:	1	0.5	N/A
John F. Kennedy High School			
Referred to special education:	1	0.5	0.0
Retained in grade:	34	17.5	N/A

There were no referrals to special education at John Bowne High School. At John F. Kennedy High School, the project had a higher percentage of referrals to special education than the mainstream students. Data was not available for OREA to evaluate the grade retention objective.

Project partially met objective.

Gifted and Talented Placement/Enrollment in Post-Secondary Institutions

- As a result of participation in the program, placement in programs for gifted and talented and enrollment in post-secondary education institutions will be 5 percent greater than mainstream students.

Evaluation Indicator: School records.

There were no students referred to gifted and talented programs.

No students graduated.

Project did not meet objective.

Parental Involvement

- As a result of the program, parents of project students will demonstrate 10 percent more parental involvement than parents of mainstream students.

Evaluation Indicator: Attendance records at school functions.

John Bowne High School held three Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meetings. Students were allowed to attend with their parents, and many did so. Thirty parents attended the first session, 42 parents attended the second session, and 13 parents attended the last meeting. The resource specialist also invited a number of Project ALMA parents to P.T.A. meetings.

John F. Kennedy High School started a PAC during the spring semester and held two meetings, but no data on attendance were available.

Mainstream data on parental involvement were unavailable.

OREA was unable to evaluate objective.

Other Activities

The project provided field trips to the opera, ballet, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and several stage productions. Students visited hospitals to consider careers in the health field. Guest speakers discussed careers in engineering and writing and gave career advisement. A Dominican physician discussed careers in the medical field. Some of the guest speakers were former paraprofessionals at the sites.

An International Extravaganza of songs, dances, and foods took place in the spring semester. The show included groups of Project ALMA students. Project parents were invited to attend.

Project ALMA students participated in the Oratory Olympics to give them confidence. This was a program for creative writing and reading works aloud.

The project implemented a library for students, using students to catalogue the books, and encouraging students to use and become comfortable with the library.

At John Bowne High School, peer tutoring was incorporated into programming. During lunch periods, students of Spanish, English, and mathematics helped one another. Project students were also aided by student volunteers.

MAINSTREAMING

Two students (0.5 percent of participants) were mainstreamed.

CASE HISTORY

A. was a Mexican girl who had been in the United States for only six months when she was registered at John Bowne High School. Immediately afterwards, she stopped attending. A.'s mother came to the school to consult the guidance counselor and returned for a second visit, this time with her husband. Neither parent could communicate in English. The guidance counselor contacted the Project ALMA resource teacher/specialist to interpret and assistance in other ways.

A. was very shy and was terrified by the idea of being in a classroom. The Project ALMA resource teacher specialist spoke for over an hour with both A. and her parents and convinced A. to give school a chance. All concerned parties decided that A. needed the special attention that Project ALMA could give her.

The resource specialist promised to give A. support any time an unpleasant school situation arose. Parents were instructed to call weekly to check on their daughter's attendance and social adjustment. A. returned to school the Monday after the parents' visit. A.'s teachers were alerted to her problem and were asked to report to the resource specialist any withdrawn behavior or any other problem that might lead to her dropping out of school. The project also provided A. with extra tutoring.

A. attended the full term. Receiving such special personal attention provided the solution for school-phobic A.

APPENDIX A

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Student Data Form

This one-page form is filled out by staff for each participating and mainstreamed student. OREA gathers data from this form on backgrounds, demographics, academic outcomes, attendance, referrals, and exit from the program.

Project Director's Questionnaire

The Project Director's Questionnaire includes questions on staff qualifications, program implementation, periods of instruction, and instructional materials and techniques.

Project Director's Interview

The interview gathers information on program and student or staff characteristics not supplied by the Project Director's Questionnaire. The interview also allows project staff to offer qualitative data or amplify responses to the Questionnaire.

Citywide Test Scores

OREA retrieves scores centrally from the Language Assessment Battery (LAB) and other citywide tests. For evaluation purposes, these test scores are reported in Normal Curve Equivalents (N.C.E.s). N.C.E.s are normalized standard scores with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation (s.d.) of 21.06. They constitute an equal-interval scale in which the distance is the same between any two adjacent scores. A gain of 5 N.C.E.s is the same whether it is at the lower or the higher end of the scale. N.C.E.s can be used in arithmetic computations to indicate group progress. (Percentile scales, although more familiar to many, are unsuitable for such computations since they are not equal-interval.)

Likert-Type Surveys

Likert-type surveys, in which respondents mark their opinions on a scale from one to five, are used in a variety of ways. They examine student attitudes (i.e., toward school and career, native language use, and native and mainstream cultures). They also assess staff and parent attitude and reactions to workshops and other activities.

Gap Reduction Evaluation Design

OREA uses a gap reduction design for measuring changes in standardized tests. Since no appropriate non-project comparison group is available in New York City, where all students of limited English proficiency (LEP) are entitled to receive supplementary services, OREA compares the progress of participating students with that of the group on which the test was normed. It is assumed that the norm group would show a zero gain in the absence of instruction, and gains made by project students could be attributed to project services. (See "Citywide Test Scores" above.)

To test whether pre/posttest gains are greater than could be expected by chance alone, OREA uses a *t*-test. To determine whether a difference between two proportions (e.g., program and mainstream attendance rates) is greater than could be expected by chance, OREA uses a *z*-test. The level of significance is set at .05 for all tests.

E.S.L.

John Bowne High School Book List

E.S.L. 1
Side by Side 1a
Line by Line 1a
Everyday English 1

E.S.L. 2
Side by Side 1b
Line by Line 1b
Everyday English 2

E.S.L. 3
Side by Side 2a
Line by Line 2a
English with a Smile Book 1

E.S.L. 4
Side by Side 2B
In Good Company
Everyday English 4

E.S.L. 5
Pathways 5
Great American Stories 1 & 2

E.S.L. 6
Pathways to English 6
The Gifts and Other Stories
Easy Reading Selections in English

E.S.L. 11
The World Anthology
Graded Exercises in Grammar

E.S.L. Pre-Literacy
Survival English, Books 1 & 2
Passage to ESL Literacy
Basic English for Adult Competency
Life Styles
Photo Dictionary

John F. Kennedy High School Sequence of Texts

L1R

Turning Point, Book 1 Chapter 1-12
Workbook-Turning Point, Book 1, Chapter 1-12
Line by Line- Book 1A
Everyday English, Book 1

L2R

Turning Point, Book 1 Chapter 13-16
Workbook, Turning Point Book 1, Chapter 1-12
Turning Point, Book 2 Chapter 1-6
Workbook, Turning Point Book 2, Chapter 1-6
All in a Days Work (Minimum Chapter 1-10)
Everyday English, Book II
Real Stories, Book A

L3R

Turning Point, Book 2 Chapter 7-16
Workbook, Turning Point, Book 2 Chapter 7-16
A New Beginning
True Stories in the News
Everyday English, Book III

L4R

Turning Point, Book 3 Chapter 1-10
Workbook, Turning Point, Book 3, Chapter 1-10
Dixon's Elementary Reader in English
Great American Stories I
The Quiet Man

L5R

Turning Point, Book 3 Chapter 11-16
Workbook, Turning Point Book 3, Chapter 11-16
House of the Seven Gables (Book 1, American Classics)
Scope Anthology 1 (1st half- Sections 1-5)
React-Interact

L6R

Turning Point, Book 4 Chapter 1-5
Workbook, Turning Point Book 4, Chapter 1-5
Scope Anthology I (2nd half-sections 6-10)

L7R

Turning Point, Book 4 Chapter 6-10
Workbook, Turning Point, Book 4 Chapter 6-10
Dixon's Easy Reading
Selections
Scope Anthology 3

L8R

Turning Point, Book 4 Chapter 11-16
Workbook, Turning Point, Book 4 Chapter 11-16

L9R

No Promises in the Wind

APPENDIX C

N.L.A.

John Bowne High School Book List

Spanish Level I-	Nuevos Amigos
Spanish Level II-	Nosotros, los Jóvenes Susana y Javier en España
Spanish Level III-	Nosotros, los Jóvenes Aventuras en la Ciudad
Spanish Level IV-	Dos Novelas Picarescas Aventuras de Don Quijote La Rana Viajera Los Arboles Mueren de Pie La Barca sin Pescador La Dama del Alba Antología de Cuentos Españoles
Spanish Level V-	Literatura Moderna Hispánica Omnibus of Modern Spanish Prose
AP Spanish Language-	Una Vez Más Vivencias Hispanicás AP Spanish: A Guide for the Language Course
AP Spanish Literature-	as per authors studied
NLA Spanish-	El Cuento Cuentos Criollos Teatro Hispánico Prosa de la España Moderna Imaginación y Fantasía Galería Hispánica El Español y su Estructura

John F. Kennedy High School Book List

FSS1/FSS2	Cuentos Simpáticos Mi Primera Gramática Ortografía Básica 2 Ortografía Básica 3
FSS3/FSS4	Aventuras en la Ciudad Ortografía Básica 4 Ortografía Básica 5
FSN1/FSN2	Lecturas para Hoy (FSN1) Cuentos y más Cuentos (FSN1) Momentos Hispanos (FSN1) Marianela (FSN2) El Cuento Interrumpido (FSN2)
FSN3/FSN4	El Hidalgo de la Mancha
FSN3	Chapters 1 - 13
FSN4	Chapters 14- 25

FSN5/FSN6	La Perla Negra (FSN5) La Isla de los Delfines Azules (FSN6) Supplementary: Don Juan Tenorio (1 chess set)
FSB1/FSB2	Aventuras Literarias Caleidoscopio Leer 6 Saber VII
Readers:	El Lazarillo de Tormes (FSB2) La Barca sin Pescador (FSB1)
FSB3/FSB4	Prosa de la España Moderna Leer y Saber VIII
Readers:	El Diario de Ana Frank (FSB3) La Familia de Pascual Duarte (FSB4)
FSB5/FSB6	Literatura Moderna Hispánica Saber y Leer VIII
Readers:	La Barraca (FSB6)

APPENDIX D

Bilingual Content Areas

Global History (Spanish) - Barron's series on areas: El Medio Oriente, La Union Soviética, etc. Historia de la Humanidad

American History (Spanish) - Nueva Historia de los Estados Unidos

Economics (Spanish) - Economía para Todos

Government (Spanish) - Exploring American Citizenship

Biology (Spanish) - Concepts in Modern Biology

Physical Science (Spanish) - Physical Science

Mathematics (Spanish) - Exito en las Matemáticas
Repaso Matemático

ESL Content Areas

Global History - World Geography and You Books 1 & 2, World History and You Books 1 & 2

American History - Exploring American History

Economics - Economics for Everybody

Government - Exploring American Citizenship